

Patricia M. Widlitz

Statement to the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee

Good morning Senator Duff, Representative Janowski, Senator Kane, Representative Buck-Taylor and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My Name is Patricia Widlitz and it is an honor and privilege to be appointed by Governor Malloy to the Board of Directors of M.I.R.A., the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority. In 2014, PA 14-94 established M.I.R.A. to be the successor to CRRA and assume control over all of CRRA's assets, rights, duties and responsibilities. It has a single stream recycling facility, a resource recovery facility and three transfer stations throughout the state. M.I.R.A. provides the infrastructure to carry out Connecticut's Solid Waste Management Plan and serves 70 member municipalities. My sincere thanks for the opportunity to appear before you to speak to my desire to serve on the M.I.R.A. Board.

I earned my Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from Central Connecticut State University in 1967 and subsequently taught algebra and geometry at Wethersfield High School. My interest in public service ignited a few years later when my husband, Gary, and I moved to Guilford with our two young daughters. When our children entered the Guilford school system, I volunteered to teach math concepts to first graders, became PTO president and advocated for improvement to our schools. In 1982 I was elected to the Guilford Board of Education and served until 1989 when I was elected to the Board of Selectmen. After six years of service I decided that I wanted to participate in making state policy rather than always being on the receiving end! I successfully ran for State Representative in 1994 and represented the towns of Guilford and Branford for 20 years.

Throughout my service as State Representative I had great interest in environmental legislation. My very first legislative effort was in response to a problem I had experienced as a selectwoman. Together Guilford and Madison had a "put or pay" contract with the Preston Resource Recovery Facility and we could not generate the required tonnage of waste, but had to pay the full amount regardless of what we generated. I was dismayed to learn that the CT DEP had a contract to transport the waste from Madison's Hammonasset State Park to an out-of-state facility. With passage of legislation which required the state to honor local solid waste contracts we were successful in meeting our requirement.

Some of you may remember me as the former House Chair of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, but I also served on the Environment Committee for many years and served as Co-Chair for a term. I enjoyed the challenge of negotiating the 'Electronic Recycling' law, PA 07-189, which put Connecticut at the forefront of the issue. Working with the Eastern

Region of the Council of State Governments (CSG) I negotiated with major electronics manufacturers to require them to pay for the end-of-life recycling of their products in an environmentally appropriate way. This legislation- our first "Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)" law- has saved our municipalities many thousands of dollars in disposal/recycling costs. In 2011, I successfully led the effort to pass the "Paint Stewardship" Producer Responsibility legislation and more recently worked with advocates and the city of Hartford to pass the first EPR mattress recycling legislation in the country.

In April of 2015 I was invited to Boston to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from the EPA for my leadership and dedication to the New England environment and for my success in passage of Extended Producer Responsibility legislation in Connecticut. In 2015 I accepted an invitation to join the National Advisory Committee of the Product Stewardship Institute to assist in promoting EPR legislation in other states. I am also serving as a member of the CT Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation Advisory Board.

Retirement is great and I love spending more time with Gary, my daughters and sons-in-law and our precious 2 year old granddaughter. And now I have both the time and the interest in bringing my municipal and legislative experience to this new opportunity.

Thank you again for the privilege of coming before your committee and, especially, thank you for all you do on behalf of the people of the State of Connecticut.